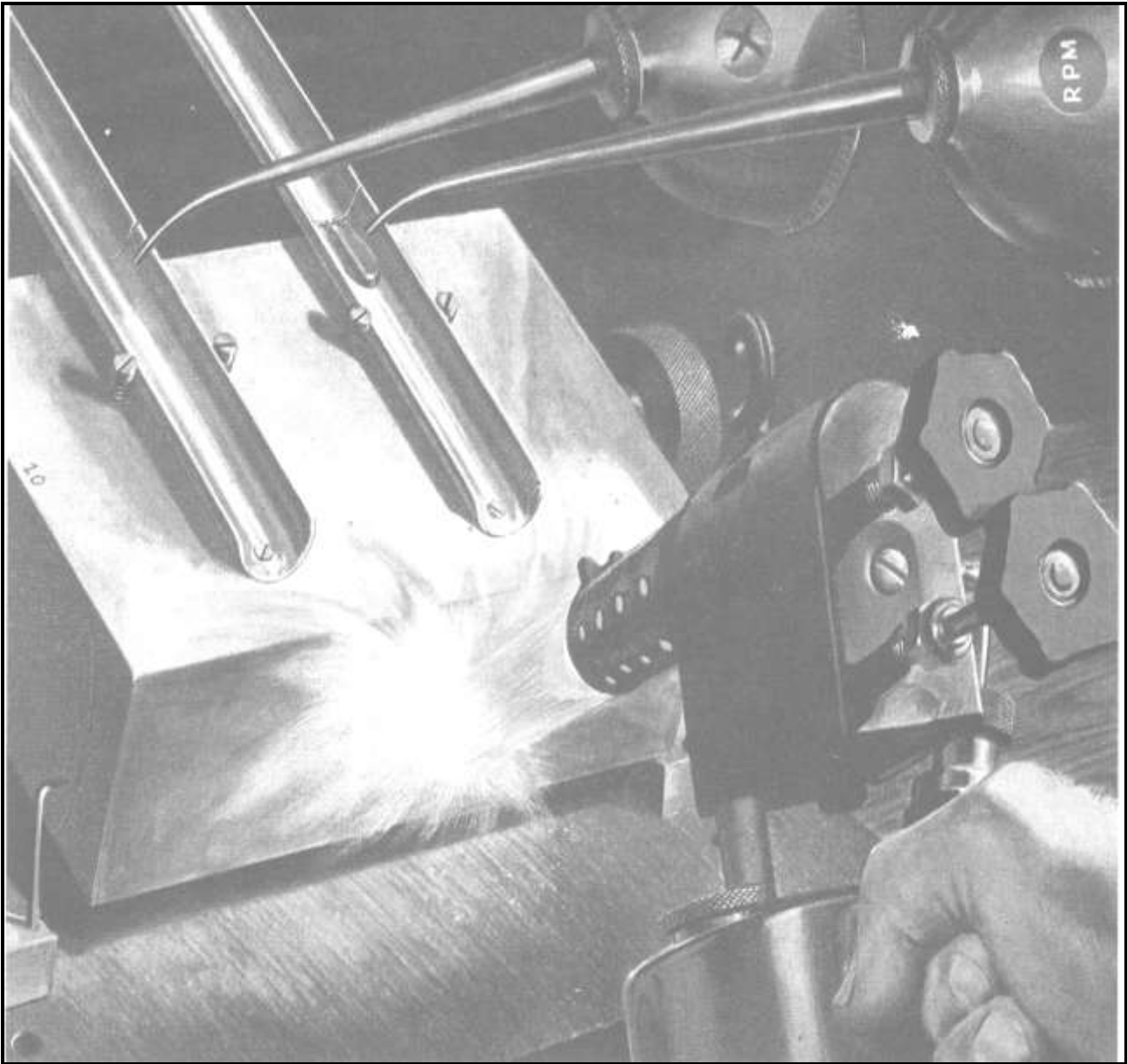


THE TORCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLOW TORCH COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

Issue #43

March 2009



TRIAL BY FIRE

An illustration from the Saturday Evening Post magazine, January 18, 1947.

See related story on page nine.

Submitted by Al Austin

NEW MEMBERS

Bob Fritz, Joppa, Maryland, recently became a new member thanks to his dad and BTCA member, **Wendel Fritz**.

David Gaines, Saint Albans, West Virginia, is a ten-year collector with just over 100 torches in his collection...and all are restored and prominently displayed in his home.

Charles Johnson, Eatontown, New Jersey, joined BTCA after recently purchasing the *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES* book on eBay.

Stan Olsen, Yorkton, Saskatchewan, Canada is a long-time collector with over 60 torches in his collection. Like many of us....Stan thought that he was the only torch collector in the world! He occasionally purchases torches on eBay, and when he and his wife winter in Yuma, Arizona, he peruses the antique stores and flea markets for torch bargains. Stan purchased the *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES* book on eBay and joined BTCA at the same time.

Wayne Poapst, Merrickville, Ontario, Canada, is a six-year collector with over 200 blow torches, and 145 are all different types from six different countries. The 145 torches are all restored and displayed on shelves for anyone to view. See Wayne's story in a follow up article.

James Smith, Chipley, Florida is a thirty-year torch collector! He and his wife Pat own and operate the High Plumbing Company in Chipley...so James is very familiar with blow torches. He discovered our group thanks to BTCA member **George Husen**.

WELCOME ABOARD!



☰ NOTES FROM ALL OVER ☰

Al Austin was cleaning up his shop, and among the treasures that he uncovered included several magazines and sales catalogs dating back to the 1930s and 1940s. While looking through the literature, he can across a few torch-related articles, and decided to make copies and sent them in to us. One article in particular caught our eye, TRIAL BY FIRE from a 1947 *Saturday Evening Post* magazine....see the related story in this issue about this interesting topic.

Al also sent in a photo of his three-star rated rare Shapleigh Hardware Co., Shapleigh Norleigh one-quart torch. It has the Diamond Brass logo plate and horizontal air pump assembly. →



HELP....WE NEED YOUR INPUT. Wayne Poapst, a new BTCA member, has been in the layout design and printing business for twenty years, and he advised that using the whole width of 8.5 inches in a single column layout is a no-no since the human eye does not reach that far without having to move, and the reader will lose the return to the left side to pick up the next word. According to Wayne's experience, having two columns is the way to go.

You all have noticed that we've gravitated from three columns to two columns, and recently to one column and a combination of one and two columns in our newsletter layout. We're certainly not professional layout people and just did what looked good or was convenient. Based on Wayne's comments, it makes us wonder if we should revert back to a two column layout or a combination.

We would like to hear from our readers on their reading experiences with our different layouts and your preferences; one column, two columns, or a combination of one and two columns. This newsletter is being published using a one/two column combination. We aim to please, so please let us know your preference for future newsletters.

Wendel Fritz sent in some great photos....one in particular caught our attention, it was a photo of the same greenhouse building that housed the 11th Annual BTCA convention on his property in Joppa, Maryland. What's so unusual about the photo is that the greenhouse is filled with red and white Christmas poinsettias! We would have posted the photo, but a black and white photo of colorful poinsettias would not do it justice. Instead we'll print a photo of one of Wendel's torches, an Otto Bernz No. 50 Painter's Flat Burner Blow Torch.

This is one of the few painters' torches produced by the Otto Bernz Co. that featured a rectangular-shaped horizontal burner head nozzle. According to a Bernz advertisement, the torch could also be provided with a burner assembly in the vertical position. Many torch manufacturers provided a paint burner attachment that would fit over most round burner nozzles...actually Bernz also produced that same attachment; however Bernz also produced this dedicated No. 50 Painters' Blow Torch. → → →

EDITOR'S NOTE: We really appreciate all of the emails, letters, and photos that members continually send in to BTCA. We try our best to print the information submitted and include accompanying photos; however, due to photo quality or limited space, we sometimes cannot print everything that is submitted. Remember, WHITE or VERY LIGHT SOLID COLORED backgrounds for the photos, and get as close as possible. Also, please include dimensions and any identifying information. Thanks for your support.



Charles Smith recently purchased this Wall torch on eBay. What's so unusual is that it appears to be chrome plated...the entire torch is plated! The plating is very poor so it may not have been a production model. Does anyone else own a plated Wall torch?



Jim Minton sent in a great photo of his Hanau Dental torch. Both the torch and the box look to be in excellent condition. Also, Jim is restoring a 1948 Ford Coupe...but no photo. Jim, how about a photo of the Coupe when it is finished? ↓↓↓



Keith Mahaffey sent in a note with his dues payment describing a blow torch he recently purchased. It is stamped with FARWELL OZMUN KIRK & CO., ST. PAUL. Now, that is a name we've never heard before! Keith followed up with photos of a quart-size blow torch that we suspect was manufactured by the Geo. Diener Mfg. Co. and brand labeled for Farwell, Ozmun, Kirk & Co.

The fuel control knob and the air pump configuration are typical of the Diener Co., although the handle looks more like a Clayton & Lambert torch. We will be adding this name and photo to the upcoming supplement.



For those of you that collect firepots, here's a behemoth that you should have in your collection! **Bob Scheiderman** sent in a Clayton & Lambert firepot and blow torch catalog D dated January 1930. Included in the literature were a few firepots not seen before that will be added to the blow torch book supplement.

In particular is the No. 75 firepot...a real behemoth! Unfortunately there are no dimensions listed in the catalog, however, one can only imagine its size considering that it can easily and quickly melt 100 pounds of solder! It also featured an easily replaceable burner unit that could be changed out in a mere forty five seconds! It could also burn either gasoline or kerosene simply by changing out the burner orifice...one each was supplied with the firepot. It had a fuel capacity of one gallon, weighed in at 20 pounds without fuel, and had a list price of \$50...and that was in 1930 dollars!



We heard from **Metro Roark**...he just purchased some buffing equipment and has restored about fifty torches. Unfortunately his wife Linda will only allow him to keep about fifteen torches in the house. Linda, you have to understand how important it is to be able to display one's restoration efforts, so cut Metro some slack and up that number a bit!

We could not resist printing this ad for a Thompson submachine gun that **Charles Smith** found during his torch research in the various trade magazines. The article is from the Hardware Dealer's Magazine, volume 55, number 328, dated April, 1921. You'll note in the article that the submachine gun "*can be carried under one's coat ready for instant use*".

THE THOMPSON SUBMACHINE GUN
The Most Effective Portable Fire Arm in Existence

The Thompson Submachine Gun is the lightest automatic gun in the world, weight seven pounds. It can be taken apart and assembled in less than a minute without tools. It can be carried under the coat ready for instant use. It enables the amateur to fire with the precision of an expert machine gunner. There is nothing to break, wear or jam. It fires at the rate of 1500 shots per minute full automatically from the shoulder or semi-automatically a shot for each pull of the trigger.

Hardware jobbers and Dealers can stock this remarkable new gun to advantage. It has a thousand and one uses. Write for full details.

AUTO-ORDNANCE CORPORATION, 302 Broadway, New York City

AUTO-ORD CO

Max Rhodes acquired this interesting looking blow torch. It appears to have been manufactured by the Wall Mfg. Co. The handle has cast into it the initials "GMPC", with no other identifying marks or numbers.

He purchased the item from Germany, so it is possible that it was manufactured for the US military. Does anyone have any information on GMPC or a similar type of torch?



Chris Mello emailed in numerous photos of some of his favorite torches. One in particular is an Otto Bernz No. 13 Self-Blowing Alcohol Torch as seen below on the left. It is somewhat unusual to see a complete torch including the windscreen, screw-on nozzle cap the prevented fuel evaporation, and the wood handle.

Chris also emailed a great photo of a new...never used W. B. Marvin Mfg. Co. No. 20 Soldering Torch as seen below on the right. It's a real bonus when you can find a new and unused torch with the original box. It certainly adds to the value of an item and at times provides additional information about the item.



Jim Janke sent in a photo of one of his blow torches manufactured by the Unique Mfg. Co. It has to be the brightest red we've ever seen, and unfortunately this black and white photo does not do it justice. Trust us....it is bright red! →→→



Dave Schulte emailed photos of an interesting item manufactured by the Quick Meal Stove Co. which was a division of the American Stove Co. Quick Meal did produce a small line of paint burner blow torches and soldering iron furnaces.

We're not really sure what Dave's item really is. It's made entirely of brass except for the drip cups; the fuel tank is approximately six inches in diameter and 4.5 inches tall. Dave guesses at a fuel capacity of 1.5 - 2 quarts. There are no valves for fuel or flame adjustments, only an air pump and a missing pressure relief valve. It's possible that it is the bottom portion of a soldering iron furnace, or it could also be part of a cooking stove since the company certainly produced a huge variety of cooking devices. ↓↓↓



Ron Johnson Jr. submitted some interesting information on the Hanau Dental blow torch. If you have the *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES* book and read the history of the Hanau torch, you'll remember that the Hanau Bakelite torch continues to be manufactured and marketed today by Water Pik Technologies, successor to Hanau Engineering Co. by a succession of acquisitions including Teledyne Inc. Ron has a Hanau torch and the original box with Teledyne Inc. as the manufacturer. The box lists the company as TELEDYNE HANAU and located in Buffalo, New York. The box is dated November, 1982.



HOW I STARTED COLLECTING TORCHES

By **Wayne Poapst**

I have been an auctioneer since 1978, and for the past 20 years I have been a backup for another auctioneer. Back in 2002, while working at an auction as backup, I was holding up five very dirty, oily, grimly-looking blow torches. We couldn't get any bids from the audience...so I offered five dollars....and the auctioneer said SOLD! When I got home, I found that they were five different torches...and those were the first torches that started my collection.

I grew up on a farm and dad always had a blow torch, so I have some fond memories of him using his torch. I started doing some torch research, however, the only information that I could find in print was the book authored by Dick Sarpolus. I did finally find and purchase the *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES* book. Since purchasing the reference book I have bid on and bought at least twenty torches on eBay. I lost two to other bidders for over \$300, and knew they were very rare based on the book's rarity rating section....so the book has been very helpful to me.

I attend up to nine shows each year at various fairs, antique shows, and museums where I display my torches and torch related materials. I own a metal trailer with eight foot long metal racks that hold approximately 75 torches.

Since I know a lot of antique dealers, they all keep their eyes open for torches for me and other auctioneers also help me locate torches. In addition to my 200+ torches, I also have an assortment of soldering irons, a few firepots, a few cast iron tractor seats, and I used to collect "hit 'n miss" engines.



5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The following members are celebrating their 5th anniversary as members of BTCA. Congratulations on your first five years and thank you for your continued support of our organization!

Rick Beals	Malcolm Francis
Jack Crooks	Martin French
Jean Claude De Marteleire	Leslie Lee
Rudy Dokter	Jimmie Mayes
Malcolm Forster	Gerald Watson

10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

A special thank you goes out to the following 26 members that joined BTCA ten years ago! Many thanks for your long term support of our organization!

Tom Bartlett	Jim Janke
Stefan Berg	William Kitazaki
Howard DeRosa	Bobby Lester
John Dorffeld	Lee Miller
Clarence Goldberg	Bob Scheiderman
Leroy Goodwin	Hilton Shackley
Clyde Halsey	Tom Smith
Billy Hart	Robert Spear
Orthun Hereim	Mel Stoddard
John Hoffman	Andy Stratton
Tom Holder	Vicky Teeters
Allan Houghton	Merlin Vandenplas
Donald Huntington	Dave Weaver

TRIAL BY FIRE

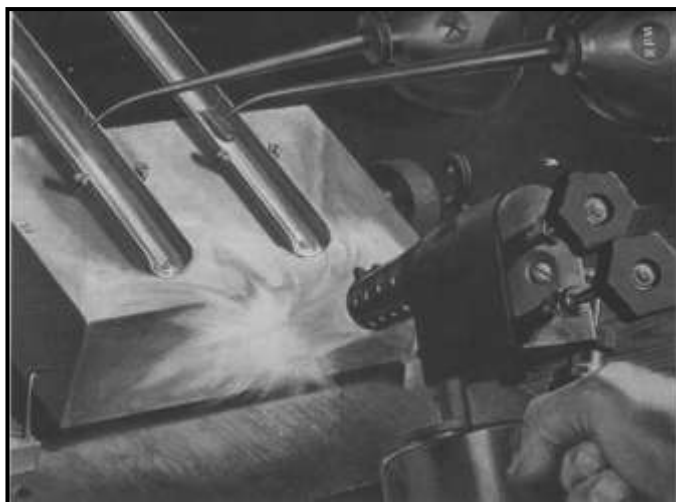
Submitted by **Al Austin**

Al uncovered this article in a January 18, 1947 Saturday Evening Post magazine. It is an advertisement for RPM motor oil. The illustration depicts a dramatic blow torch test demonstrating how “old-style” oil runs away from heat while compounded RPM oil stays put. The article reads: *“This picture couldn’t have been made a few short years ago. In this blistering blast of blow torch heat, you see the RPM compounded motor oil disproving the old theory that oil runs from heat. The secret of RPM’s ability to withstand searing temperatures, such as this blow torch demonstration, is a new compound perfected in Standard of California Laboratories. This demonstration shows how uncompounded oil, on the left, actually runs uphill to escape heat while the compounded RPM oil, on the right, stays put in the trough. In upper cylinders of modern automobiles, where flame temperatures soar to 3600 degrees F, uncompounded oils often leave bare spots exposed to metal-to-metal wear. RPM compounded oil sticks to these hot spots, cuts down on wear and repair bills, and stretches engine life.”*

The article stated that RPM compounded oil was 100% pure paraffin based, and laboratory testing results indicated that engines utilizing RPM compounded oil wore 30% less than conventional oiled engines. The RPM oil was sold on the east coast through Calso gas stations, and on the west coast at Chevron and Standard gas stations.

Today, ChevronTexaco Products Company continues to produce a complete line of RPM lubricants for a variety of gasoline and diesel engines.

We’re a bit reluctant to positively identify the blow torch used in the laboratory testing. Many of the characteristics reflect a Clayton & Lambert torch...possibly a No. 308 with a windscreen. However, we’re perplexed about the fuel cap on the top left of the fuel tank. It is an illustration, so the artist may have added his own ideas on what a blow torch should look like.



DO YOU HAVE A LENK HOOK?

Actually, it is a soldering iron hook or support for a small Lenk gasoline torch. **Charles Smith** acquired the torch with the soldering iron hook attached to the torch. Both the wire hook and front burner notched piece are made of steel, although the front burner piece appears to be copper plated.

The torch in the photo is a Lenk No. 104, a ¾ pint gasoline model illustrated on page 275 of the *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES* book, although the soldering-iron attachments would certainly fit on many other Lenk models. We do not know whether the attachments were distributed by Lenk or are hand-made items to suit the needs of its original owner. Does anyone else have the same attachments on their Lenk torch?



WHITE MFG. CO.

JUNIOR LOOK-ALIKE

In the late 1800s, Clayton & Lambert manufactured a No. 4 Junior blow torch, with a very unusual and small cone-shaped fuel tank, see *VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES* book, page 112. From what information we have on the No. 4 Junior, it appears that C&L only produced the torch from about 1897 to around 1900. After 1900, C&L does not even offer replacement parts for the No. 4 Junior torch in any of their torch and parts catalogs, so we suspect that they only produced a limited quantity and for a very short period of time.

We know that a few members own No. 4's, and **Mike Thornhill** actually displayed one at the 7th Annual BTCA Convention in Las Vegas...so a few have survived.

We're leading up to the fact that the White Mfg. Co. also produced the same torch. We recently learned this since **Charles Smith** and **Wendel Fritz** each sent in photos of their White Junior look-alike torches...and they are nearly identical to the C&L Junior torch. Who copied who....that is the question.

The information on the brass label of Wendel's torch is stamped "PATENT PENDING", and the referenced patent was issued on June 29, 1897. →→→



The first known mention of the C&L Junior torch was in a tool advertisement dated 1897. The patent date on Charles' White torch references a June 29, 1897 date, however, the application for the patent was made on April 20, 1896...ten months prior to the patent award date. Referring to Wendel's torch, the information on his brass label indicates "PATENT PENDING", which says that White was producing the torch sometime before the June, 1897 date. There is too much of a coincidence in the timing to think that each company came up with the same design and appearance...so the question is, again, who copied who.

What's really ironic is that the illustration in the White patent has no resemblance whatsoever with either the C&L Junior or the White Junior look-alike...although Charles discovered that the White patent, number 585,641, is referenced on many of his other White torches that are not the Junior style. Another ironic point is that we have some White Mfg. Co. literature dating back to 1894, yet there is no reference to the Junior look-alike.

The White Company did not assign numbers to their torches, but rather gave them names; i.e. TEMPEST, FIRE FLY, TERROR, etc., but since we've never seen this particular torch listed in any White literature, there is no way to determine its name...perhaps they would have named it JUNIOR.

The Smith torch →→ and Fritz torch vary somewhat in the burner assembly design, but since the Fritz torch was manufactured much earlier than the Smith torch, perhaps White changed to a different burner design after the patent was issued. One way to determine this is for BTCA members to check their collections for a White Junior look-alike and send in your photos of the torch and the label information. Maybe we can solve the mystery of which burner design is the correct one.



A.E. LOVETT

By Charles Smith

I recently acquired an A.E. Lovett torch → with a horizontal burner that is not listed in the VINTAGE BLOWTORCHES book. It was really dirty when I got it but the magic fluid and Evapo-Rust worked wonders! I also have the vertical "twin" which is shown on page 285 of the book.

The copper tank, fill and pump assemblies, handle and strap-handle support, and drip cup are identical between the two, including the size of each component. Even the burner is identical in all aspects, including dimensions, except for the horizontal rather than vertical female mounting screw. I have to presume that the brass wind screen was supplied only with the horizontal torches. My vertical torch has none, and Lloyd's vertical torch that is shown on page 285 of the book also has no wind screen.



Interestingly, the "Lovett Barthel" torches shown in the middle left part of page 285 agree with this observation. I must admit that both of my copper-tank Lovett torches are indeed beautiful!



BLOWTORCH CAUSES HOUSE FIRE

Submitted by **Charles Smith**

In the last newsletter, it was an article about getting rid of cobwebs. This time the torch was used in melting ice. Will they never learn?

Fire officials in New Bedford, Mass., said that a man using a blowtorch to melt ice on his back porch ended up setting his house on fire, causing up to \$30,000 in damage.

Fire Capt. Scott Kruger told reporters that no one was injured during the incident at the three-story home. Kruger says the man was using a blowtorch hooked up to a twenty-pound propane cylinder. He got too close to the building's wood frame and ignited the vinyl siding. The fire quickly spread into the building's second and third-floor apartments. It took 25 firefighters to subdue the blaze that damaged bedrooms in the upstairs units, and caused damage to the structure and wiring.

The homeowner will not be charged.

THE TORCH

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THE PURPOSE of BTCA is to preserve the history of blow torches and related equipment, to encourage the identification, classification, and exhibiting of such equipment, also to promote the study and better understanding of operation, purpose, and application.

Membership in BTCA is open to any person sharing its interests and purposes. For membership information, write to: Blow Torch Collectors Association, 6908 April Wind Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89131-0119, email to: RONLV@cox.net, or by phone: (702) 395-3114.

THE TORCH encourages contributions from anyone interested in our purpose. Articles can be submitted in any format and should include supportive literature whenever possible. All submittals should be sent to Ron Carr at the above address.

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